

FDA Announces a New Cooperative Agreement Program to Improve and Integrate the National Animal Food Safety System

Constituent Update

September 22, 2022

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) are pleased to announce the award of the *Federal and State Integration Activities to Advance Cooperation and Regulatory Standards Among Animal Food Safety Regulatory Programs* cooperative agreement to the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), which has partnered with the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). This cooperative agreement will facilitate long-term improvements to the national animal food safety system by strengthening interagency collaboration, improving states' regulatory and surveillance protection programs, and promoting the implementation of the Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS). The total funding for the cooperative agreement program will be up to \$1.8 million over three years.

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) gave the FDA a new public health mandate. The law applies to human food, as well as to animal food including animal food for pets. It directed the FDA to establish standards for adoption of modern animal food safety prevention practices by those who grow, process, transport, and store food. The cooperative agreement directly supports the FDA's mandate to protect the nation's manufactured human food and animal food under FSMA. Congress recognized that the more than 3,000 State, Local, Territorial, and Tribal (SLTT) government agencies involved in food safety, including animal food safety, must be fully integrated in FDA's work to fulfill FSMA's mandate that consumers be protected by an animal food safety system based on prevention and risk. This national integrated animal food safety system will ensure the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of state and federal efforts to protect the animal food supply.

This cooperative agreement will help the FDA to leverage the strengths of both NASDA and AAFCO, to assist SLTT animal food programs in their efforts in facilitating long term improvements to the national animal food safety system and achieve integration of the system by strengthening interagency collaboration, improving states' regulatory and surveillance protection programs, and promoting the AFRPS.

As part of the three-year cooperative agreement program, NASDA and AAFCO will work collaboratively with the FDA to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the efforts of federal and state government agencies to build a national integrated animal food safety system.
- Establish systems for sharing, promotion, and collaboration of best practices, guidance documents, sampling plans, procedures, memorandums of understanding, and other

tools to facilitate and encourage mutual reliance between federal and state animal food regulatory programs and public health agencies.

- Identifying, developing, delivering, promoting, and/or assisting with the attendance of animal food safety training programs to support implementation of the AFRPS, as well as training and stakeholder support for provisions of FSMA; and
- Support the advancement of the AFRPS and future revisions of the AFRPS as part of a system of continuous improvement to ensure the standards are modernized and support the needs of animal food regulatory programs.

“We thank FDA for entrusting the NASDA Foundation and AAFCO with the valuable work of helping local, state, tribal and territorial government institutions improve our national animal food safety system through new coordination and sharing knowledge of how to best implement modern food safety practices.” NASDA CEO Ted McKinney said. *“We look forward to building further on our current work with NASDA members and AAFCO as we collectively strengthen animal food safety in American agriculture.”*

“AAFCO is thankful for the opportunity to partner with the FDA and the NASDA Foundation as we work to pursue the shared goal of improving the national animal food safety system in the United States,” stated Austin Therrell, AAFCO executive director. *“AAFCO is committed to being the trusted leader that safeguards animal and human health. This additional support from the FDA and the NASDA Foundation will assist our association as we foster mutual reliance between agencies and help our state members to further strengthen their animal food regulatory and surveillance protection programs.”*

In addition, Erik Mettler, Assistant Commissioner for Partnerships and Policy within FDA’s Office of Regulatory Affairs offered the following comments on the announcement of the new award, *“The FDA and the States drive toward a common goal of an Integrated Food Safety System to assure the public they have access to safe food. This award strengthens interagency collaboration and improving states’ regulatory and surveillance protection programs for animal food supports our efforts to ensure a safe food supply from farm to table.”*

About AAFCO

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) has been guiding state, federal and international feed regulators with ingredient definitions, label standards and laboratory standards for more than 110 years, while supporting the health and safety of people and animals. Its members are charged by their state or federal laws to regulate the manufacture, sale and distribution of animal feeds and animal drug remedies. [Learn more at aafco.org](http://aafco.org).

Specific questions on this program can be directed to [Isaiah Isakson](mailto:Isaiah.Isakson@fda.hhs.gov), the Office of Partnerships' contact within the Division of Partnership Investments and Agreements. For additional information, please view the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#) or email the Office of Partnerships in FDA’s Office of Regulatory Affairs at OP.Feedback@fda.hhs.gov.